







# THE CHURCH

## The Fullness of Christ and the Hope of the Universe

A SERMON PREACHED BY

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At the Opening Session of the Joint  
Commission on Unification of the  
Methodist Episcopal Church  
and the Methodist Epis-  
copal Church, South

IN

The First Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore, Md.

Thursday, December 28, 1916, at 10:30 A.M.



## PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS sermon by Bishop Candler was preached at the request of the Joint Commission and is now printed by order of this Commission. In introducing Bishop Candler to the audience assembled to hear this sermon, Dr. John F. Goucher said: "I hold in my hand a copy of the sermon which was preached one hundred and thirty-two years ago day before yesterday by the Rev. Bishop Thomas Coke, on 'The Godhead of Christ,' before the Christmas Conference, at the ordination of Bishop Asbury. He spoke for eighty-one Methodist preachers in America, none of them ordained, nearly all of them young men. They represented between fourteen thousand and fifteen thousand members of separate classes. It was a great utterance. It has not ceased to echo in the hearts of the children of men. That occasion was epochal. We have assembled to-day for the first meeting of the Joint Commission on Unification by Reorganization, representing the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. The man of God who will address us at this hour speaks to the twenty-eight thousand ministers and the six million two hundred and thirty-three thousand communicants of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church, and in a very real sense he will speak also for the forty-four thousand ministers and the seven million eight hundred and fifty thousand communicants

of American Methodism; while the fifty thousand ministers and the nine million six hundred and seventy-one thousand and thirty-five communicants of world-wide Methodism and a far larger constituency, including all evangelical Christianity, are deeply interested in this occasion.”

A. W. HARRIS,

FRANK M. THOMAS,

*Secretaries.*

## THE CHURCH THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST AND THE HOPE OF THE UNIVERSE.

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THE meeting of the Joint Commission, appointed to consider the unification of the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, is shadowed by a sore bereavement. Bishop Alpheus Waters Wilson, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, the member of the Commission who was designated to preach the sermon at this hour, died at his home in this city on November 21. "A prince and a great man has fallen in Israel," and his loss to us at this momentous hour in the history of American Methodism is indeed most grievous. He had been a member of both branches of Episcopal Methodism in America and was qualified in an unusual degree to give wise counsel concerning the great matter which engages our attention at this time.

Among the preachers of the gospel in his day and generation there was none greater. Upon him there was a prophetic unction which enabled him to proclaim the word of life with great authority and power.

If he could have lived until this hour, he would have brought to us a message of light and life concerning "The Church in the Mind of God," the high theme which he had selected to discuss. But he has been transferred to the Church above, and we are deprived of the



joy and profit of hearing him speak of "the things pertaining to the kingdom of Christ."

Our disappointment is greater because of the announcement of the lofty theme which he intended to discuss, a theme dear to his prophetic soul and for the exposition of which he had preëminent gifts. We miss both the preacher and his subject.

About ten days ago I was surprised by the request of the committee having the matter in charge to stand in his place to-day. I could not do otherwise than accede to the request, but I accepted the appointment with much misgiving. I undertake the task under a disabling sense of embarrassment, arising from my conscious insufficiency for it and burdened by the weight of the sore personal bereavement which I feel in his death.

My embarrassment is increased by the delicate suggestion of the committee that I discuss the theme which our revered friend and father in Israel had intended to discuss at this hour, a suggestion which I would have adopted most willingly if I could have commanded his ability for its discussion. I am sure you will not censure me for declining to attempt what is beyond the limits of my ability. I stand in his place because I must, but you will not expect me to fill it. Who among us could fill it?

It was suggested, further, that the sermon should be written in full; and this also adds to my embarrassment, for this is contrary to all the habits of my ministry of above forty years.

But if I may render even an imperfect service to Amer-

ican Methodism and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, I am ready to ignore considerations of personal embarrassment and for the time to forget, if I can, even the pangs of the great grief that fills my heart.

The subject to which I ask your attention is set forth in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, at the fifteenth verse and in the verses following to the end of the chapter: "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

It is one of the striking characteristics of our holy religion that letters are found among its sacred books. By this fact its historic nature is stamped, and it is

forever distinguished above all systems which take their rise in racial myths or ethnic legends. "This thing was not done in a corner," but came forth in the open light of day, at the great centers of civilization, in the first century. Letters require for their production writers to send them forth, persons to receive them, and occasions to elicit them. They are the fruit of personal history, and the fact illumines their pages and makes their exposition more easy and their meaning more definite and clear.

Most of the letters of the New Testament were written by one man, Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, to whom was committed the greatest of missions and who in the fulfillment of his high ministry received and proclaimed the most glorious revelations concerning Christ and the Church.

The epistles of St. Paul are grouped about the great issues which called them forth. They sprang from the controversies in which he earnestly contended for "the faith once for all delivered to the saints"; for he did contend mightily against heresies and heresiarchs, not being one of those blind optimists who would not be optimists at all except they were blind and who believe that because truth must triumph in time it, therefore, triumphs by the mere flow of time without the efforts of any one to assert and defend it. Paul knew that there is nothing in the mere ongoing of time to make the truth prevail, that it requires champions to proclaim it and martyrs to die for it. Wherefore he stood for its de-

fense and suffered for its propagation, and his letters are the imperishable records of his invincible courage in resisting error and his unfaltering fidelity in preaching "the truth as it is in Jesus." The Roman, Corinthian, and Galatian epistles, for example, are concerned mainly with his controversy with the Judaizers, who sought to restrain the saving currents of redeeming love within the narrow channels of Jewish ritualism. These belong to the days of his earlier ministry.

Later, near the close of his life, came "the letters of the captivity"; and among these, the Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians, which seem to have been written almost at one sitting, occupy the chief place.

During the first Roman imprisonment of the great apostle he was visited by Epaphras of Colosse, a faithful servant of Christ, by whom it is probable the gospel was first preached at Colosse, and who had "a great zeal" for the Asian Churches located in the valley of the Lycus, that they might "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." (Col. iv. 12, 13.) Alarmed by a heresy which had sprung up in these Churches, he went to Rome and there took counsel with the apostle concerning the matter. He seems to have been arrested while there and to have become Paul's fellow prisoner, so that he was unable to return and carry back to the Churches the apostolic advices which they needed. Hence the apostle, in order to correct the evil which Epaphras had reported, sent to the Colossian Church an epistle by the hands of Tychicus and Onesimus, and also

by Tychicus he sent the circular letter known as the Epistle to the Ephesians to safeguard the faith of all the Churches of Asia.

The heresy which drew forth these inspired communications was a nobler and more subtle thing than that of the Judaizers which Paul refuted so vigorously and conclusively in the Epistle to the Galatians. It sprang from questions which lie at the very bottom of all religious consciousness. It was a speculative heresy which arose from the effort to harmonize the unapproachable majesty and glorious goodness of God with the creation of the world in which evil was manifest. It undertook to bridge the chasm which separates God from all created things and to establish intercommunion between the finite and the infinite. The argument of which it was the conclusion ran on this wise: "Did the invisible and infinite God create the visible and finite world out of nothing, evolve it from himself? If so, created things must have been as wholly good as he is good. But evil is too manifest for its existence to be denied. Hence God's creative energy must have been thwarted or limited by some opposing principle of evil, and this evil principle must be the world of matter. Such being the case, how can the infinite communicate with the finite, the good with the evil, God with created beings?" To meet these questions a series of emanations, æons, or angels was conceived, the highest being nearest to God and the lowest nearest matter, through whom creation was mediated and by whom God expressed himself.

Naturally from this false theology arose a false ethical theory, for moral systems in their ultimate foundations always rest on theological bases. To escape the defilement of matter a rigorous asceticism was enjoined whereby the material part of man was to be mortified and subdued, and thereby his spirit was to be set free with the hope that it might rise to a higher level of life.

Against all this dreamy speculation and futile asceticism Paul opposed Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man, whom he declared to be "the image of the invisible God," "the first-born of every creature," by whom all things were "created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers," and for whom "all things were created." He affirmed that this only-begotten Son of God, "in whom is redemption and the forgiveness of sins," was "before all things, and by him all things consist," and that he is in vital union with the Church as the head is united with the body. (Col. i. 14-19.) With soaring faith he declared that "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. ii. 9), for "it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness [*i. e.*, all the divine attributes and perfections] dwell." (Col. i. 19.) Having thus set forth that in Christ is resident forever the whole function of mediation, both in the universe and in the Church, that through him alone, without any intervening link or line of communication, man has access to the eternal Father, the inspired apostle brushed aside the impotent prohibi-

tions of a vain asceticism and substituted for them a new principle of life in the incarnate and risen Lord: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 1-4.)

From such a presentation of the preëminence and power of Christ as Paul set forth in the Colossian epistle it was inevitable that he should go forward to set forth the glory and greatness of the Church as we find it declared in the Ephesian epistle. In both epistles the apostle could truly say, "I speak concerning Christ and the Church" (Eph. v. 32), for a genuinely Christian mind cannot think of the Bridegroom separate from the Bride, nor of the Bride apart from the Bridegroom.

In the letter to the Colossians perhaps we find more concerning Christ than concerning the Church, and in the letter to the Ephesians we have more concerning the Church than concerning Christ; but in both letters the glory of the Redeemer and the glory of the redeemed are constantly blended in effulgent rays that reach from earth to heaven and penetrate to principalities and powers in heavenly places, making known to all orders of being, from highest to lowest, "the manifold wisdom of God." (Eph. iii. 10.)

At the very outset of the Ephesian epistle Paul seems

to take his stand at an unearthly elevation of thought and from that lofty height to look backward to divine purposes and movements through Christ which were before the foundation of the world and forward to the culmination of these blessed ends and plans in the creation and glorification of "the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are enrolled in heaven." (Heb. xii. 23.) And on that mount of vision he would not stand alone, enraptured with its glories; but he would have his Ephesian brethren share with him the transporting views which were unfolded before his rejoicing eyes. Wherefore he prays that 'the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,' might enlighten the eyes of their understanding, that they might know "the hope of his calling" and "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," who compose his Church, "which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 23.)

As we are sent here to deal with the interests of a great and important part of Christ's Church on earth, we shall do well to make a like prayer for one another, that we too may have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, to the end that we may appreciate how high and holy and glorious is the body of Christ, of which the Churches which we represent are members.

We know that many of those who composed the Church at Ephesus were brought into the household of faith from the circle of men who practiced the low and



superstitious arts of magic, but the apostle does not scruple to say that even men of such low degree had in Christ become a part of "the riches of glory of God's inheritance in the saints." And we too may dare to claim our place, humbly and thankfully, in the redeemed company which makes up the whole divine family in heaven and in earth; for we also, if we be truly united to the Redeemer of men and the Head of the Church, are assured that the Father has "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." (Eph. i. 5, 6.)

Gratefully taking our rightful position in the Church of God, let us consider prayerfully the age-long purpose which culminates in the body of Christ and seek to comprehend the divine energy which is put forth to bring it to pass.

Every word in this wonderful passage is charged with heavenly power, and every phrase quivers with the force of an unearthly life. "The hope of his calling." To what heavenly end do these words point? "The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." What weighty treasure of God is thus described? In the Hebrew Scriptures Israel, a nation supernaturally begotten and preserved by God, was described as the Lord's peculiar treasure and his inheritance, even as a patriarchal king might claim as his inheritance the people sprung from his loins and called by his name. But Paul con-

ceives the Church, composed of men and women who are redeemed by Christ's blood "out of every tongue and people and nation," as the more glorious inheritance of the Father Almighty. And this Church, he declares, is nothing less than "the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

To secure the fulfillment of "the hope of such a calling," to amass "the riches of the glory of such an inheritance," and to accomplish "the fullness of him that filleth all in all" requires nothing less than the power whereby Christ was raised from the dead and enthroned far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, "but also in that which is to come," and made "the head over all things." To achieve such a result the forces of the resurrection and ascension, which had prevailed for the exaltation of the Head of the Church, are required for the glorification of his body.

We cannot rise to the height of the apostle's conception of these high and holy things except we ascend by the same path up which he passed to reach his lofty view. We must discern the God-man both in his relation to the universe as the Creator and Head of the natural world and in his relation to the Church as the Author and Head of the new moral creation. We must view the Redemer as the "first-born of every creature, who is before all things, and by whom and for whom all things were created." (Col. i. 15-17.) We must see him as the unifying power which binds all things together, the

Person in whom is manifested the unity of the divine aim in all things and by whom that aim is assured and realized. For we doubt not that the increasing purpose which runs through the ages is in the eternal nature of the divine Father and that the end of creation is identical with the aim of redeeming love. The everlasting God and the eternal Son are "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever," and the divine purpose is as unchangeable and unwavering as the divine nature.

In the beginning nothing outside of himself existed to move God to action. Creation was the outflowing of his holy and loving character, and its goal was to be reached in moral beings worthy of his divine affection and capable of responding to his fatherly heart with adoring love.

Redemption is not an afterthought to meet an exigency of evil which took God by surprise, but it is the fulfillment of a divine intention which before the foundation of the world proposed to show forth the divine glory in sons of God made in his own image and likeness. The heart of the universe is a Father's heart; and in Christ our Lord, the only-begotten Son, creative and redemptive love in the morning of creation went forth together "to the praise of his glory."

What, then, is the divine purpose? How is its character disclosed in creation?

God being infinitely wise, it must follow that all his acts have a rational end; and being self-existent and eternal, his acts must originate in himself and not in any-

thing outside of himself. In all his deeds he simply acts out the Godhood which is within him. Hence it is said in the Scriptures that he does all things for his own "name's sake," which is but another way of saying that his actions are the effluence of his nature. In like manner it is said that God acts for his own glory, his glory being the sum of the divine perfections. So in every act of creation, in every movement of providence, and in every deed of redemption he expresses the Godhood that is in him. The gnosticism of the Churches of Asia did not err from the truth in insisting that God must express himself in some way, but an expression which is less than perfect sonship cannot adequately express the eternal Father. Through sonship, and through sonship alone, can the glory of God, the sum of the divine perfections, shine forth. Therefore the whole creation, from the beginning, issued from the creative hand of the eternal Son, had his impress upon it, and was designed to be the sphere in which he "for whom are all things, and by whom all things" should act to bring many sons unto glory by making them partakers of his own divine nature.

The glory of a person can never be manifested adequately in any impersonal thing; therefore the creative purpose moved through all its steps to the creation of man in God's own image and likeness.

Both reason and revelation agree that the whole creation finds its culmination in that consummate specimen of God's handiwork, the human soul. But perfect sonship to God cannot be realized in any being except in one

who is free and who freely seeks to share the life of God by making the will of God the law of his life.

The creation of man was according to God's eternal purpose of manifesting his glory through such a sonship, realized in a perfected humanity united to the divine in vital union forever. Such a humanity was received by our first parents in its rudimentary form and initial stage and not in its ultimate development, which was interrupted by the fall. They were placed under the most favorable conditions for perfecting holiness in the fear of God and attaining to "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ," who is the Archetype of mankind. Such a culmination as was attained by the humanity of Christ when he was raised from the dead and seated in the highest place in the heavenlies was the end for which man was destined from the beginning and which Adam might have accomplished in and through the eternal Son, even if he had never sinned. But it could not be realized by him except in a state of probation, in which he should freely choose the divine life for himself in and by his absolute conformity to the divine law. In such a state our first parents were placed in Eden, with the fruit of the tree of life in the midst of the garden for the nourishment of their souls and under a law of God prohibiting self-assertion and self-sufficiency in eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. There, when tempted on the noblest side of their nature, they aspired to attain godlikeness by a self-sufficient way, apart from the will of God. They took their life into

their own hands and forfeited it in seeking to be the equal of God by lawless independence of him. Thereby the divine glory was extinguished in them, and in all naturally engendered from them, but not so as to be past the possibility of being returned. But God did not renounce the purpose of sonship in mankind when Adam fell. In the gloom of the fall a gleam of light broke forth to the effect that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. And this light thereafter ever grew stronger with the process of the suns. It glowed upon Abel's altar, whose bleeding sacrifice, prefiguring the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, was acceptable to God, as was not the will worship of Cain. It shone in the altar fires of the patriarchs. The flood which swept over the earth was not able to extinguish it, for we read that when the waters subsided "Noah builded an altar unto the Lord." (Gen. viii. 20.) Babel builders, who sought to climb into heaven by a structure of their own rather than seek God according to the divine will, met only confusion of tongues. The center of the race was to be in God's life and not in any ingenious machination of man.

In Abraham the promise to the woman was made more clear and spoke with the articulation of a divine Person yet to come. The hope thus kindled and fanned to a flame filled the devout dreams of the meditative Isaac; and the dying Jacob saw from afar the Shiloh coming out of Judah, "to whom the gathering of the people should be." Christly theophanies cheered the father of

the faithful, and the indwelling Spirit living in the Hebrew people in their Egyptian bondage insured that the fires of oppression did not consume the posterity of him through whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed. Moses by faith discerned the Messianic hope with which Israel was intrusted and chose deliberately to turn his back upon the honors and emoluments of royalty and to "suffer affliction with the people of God, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." (Heb. xi. 25, 26.) Subsequently the Levitical law and ordinances and services foreshadowed yet more impressively the Messianic hope which the great lawgiver embraced and to which he subjected his life. The life of the nation palpitated with this hope, the worship of the tabernacle enshrined it, and the greater glory of the temple embodied it. It filled with devout awe the hearts of the prophets and seers and psalmists of the nation, who "inquired and searched diligently concerning it, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (1 Pet. i. 10, 11.) To the office of preserving this hope Israel was set apart, and all Israelitish history is a maze without a plan if it be not read in the light of it.

So great and glorious was the light of this Messianic hope that some beyond the limits of Israel saw it and were glad. Even such men as Balaam, the son of Beor,

saw the vision of the Almighty "falling into a trance, but having his eyes open," and said: "I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel," and "out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion." (Num. xxiv. 16, 17, 19.) Through exiles and captivities, through revolutions and counter-revolutions, through persecutions and dispersions in later times the expectation of a Messiah spread throughout the East. Nearly two decades before the birth of Jesus, Suetonius made a collection of sibyls which "predicted the coming of a great king out of Judea, who should in power and glory reign over the whole earth"; and in his biography of Vespasian he says: "Throughout the whole East an ancient and uninterrupted opinion had become very prevalent that it was fated that at this time some person coming from Judea should gain supreme power." Thus the light of God's eternal purpose of sonship burning in Israel's hope gleamed afar.

While the gaze of the world was thus turned to this quarter, Jesus was born. The glory of God, which was the design of all the divine movements of creation and history, now glowed in the face of the supernatural Child. Obeisant stars were kindled by it with new light, and expectant angels rejoiced at the sight of it. The only-begotten Son, "the first-born of many brethren," had come, over whose life the Father's will was to reign and who would now show forth the perfect sonship of which the Psalmist sang, saying: "Lo, I come: in the



volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Ps. xl. 8.)

Of the effect of this coming, St. Paul writes to the Galatians: "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 4, 5.)

The God-man, very God and very man, had been born that "in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." (Eph. i. 10.)

But the end and object of his coming did not reach its fulfillment at his birth in Bethlehem when the star in the east did him reverence and the angelic host sang the "Gloria in Excelsis" above his manger-cradle. Before him stretched a life of temptation and trial and suffering, culminating in his death on the cross and in the perfecting of his sonship as the God-man in his resurrection and ascension. "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. ii. 10.)

Now that he has come, how will this newborn Son of Man, this "second Adam," bear himself under the hard conditions of his life in the flesh? Will he, under the strain of human life and earthly conditions, consult his own will, as did Adam in Eden? or will he as a devoted

Son obey perfectly the will of his Father in heaven? Will he maintain his sonship and perfect it through suffering, and in the end, as the Head of a new humanity, will he offer his blameless life in the sacrificial offering of an atoning death? The Gospels with one voice unite in telling us how his filial spirit never for one moment, from the cradle of Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary, faltered or failed. They show us One who in the sorest temptations and the bitterest trials made the will of his Father the inviolable rule of his life. Hence he could say, as none before him could say: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." (John iv. 34.) And again: "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." And yet again: "He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always the things that please him." (John viii. 29.)

The hunger of the thirty days in the wilderness did not move him to live otherwise than by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. iv. 4), and the agonies of Gethsemane wrung from his breaking heart the cry of death-defying loyalty: "Not my will, but thine be done." (Matt. xxvi. 39.) In all things he showed himself the well-beloved Son in whom the Father was bound to be well pleased. While standing under the very shadow of his cross and near to death, which he knew presently awaited him, looking into the face of God, he could and did say: "I have glorified

thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John xvii. 4.)

In the unspeakable desolation of the crucifixion he maintained and proclaimed his sonship when he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxviii. 46), claiming God as his own even when the gloom had become so thick about him that he could no longer see the Father's face. In a resolute sonship which nothing could ~~have~~ him to dishonor or forfeit he was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil. ii. 8.) But such a life and such a death could not suffice to accomplish the mission upon which he was sent for the glorification of the eternal Father. Through death and resurrection must be accomplished such an advance with regard to the constitution of his person that sonship would be perfected in a human nature capable of fittingly and adequately expressing pure spirit and raised to deathlessness. That which was natural must by the resurrection become spiritual. Weakness must be raised to power; corruption must put on incorruption; and out of the humiliation of the life of the flesh and the dishonors of the grave he must rise in glory undimmed and eternal. A mere restoration to the same type of life which he had possessed before the crucifixion would not have sufficed. A resurrection, which is more than a mere restoration, was required. His sonship as the God-man must enter upon a loftier sphere of life and power, and by the resurrection the incarnation must be exalted and eternalized. His headship of humanity must be realized, not after the

manner of him who was of the earth earthy and no more than "a living soul," but as "the Lord from heaven," now become "a quickening spirit." (1 Cor. xv. 45-47.) Wherefore God the Father raised him from the dead, "having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." (Acts ii. 24.)

There was a divine inevitableness about his resurrection, unless the eternal purpose of God in both creation and redemption were to come to naught. The imperativeness of a heavenly necessity required that he triumph over death and present in the holiest place before God a perfect humanity, sinless, immortal, and consecrated forever to the Father's will, to the end that he might make atonement for the race of which he was the Head and fulfill a priesthood "made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." (Heb. vii. 16.) Wherefore "we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that . . . he might taste death for every man." (Heb. ii. 9.) Otherwise sonship among the children of men after the fall of Adam would have been impossible, God's eternal purpose would have failed, and the promise made to the fathers through symbol and sacrifice and prophetic word would have fallen to the ground. But he rose from the dead, and hence Paul said in his wonderful discourse at Antioch of Pisidia: "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he

hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." (Acts xiii. 32, 33.) And again, in the Epistle to the Romans, the apostle says that Jesus Christ, the Father's Son and our Lord, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Rom. i. 3, 4.) He had the same great truth in mind in the Colossian epistle wherein he calls Jesus "the first-born from the dead." (Col. i. 18.) And St. John speaks after the same manner in Revelation when he alludes to Jesus as "the first-begotten of the dead." (Rev. i. 5.)

Thus we are taught that the Son of Man was by his resurrection brought to such a climax of sonship that thenceforth he could and would show forth forever the glory of sonship which God had purposed from the beginning. In an incorruptible, spiritualized, and deathless ~~manner~~ he rose from the dead, the first-born of many brethren, and became a new Head of the race. As such he ascended into heaven and showed himself before the Majesty on high, where he ever liveth to make intercession for us. (Heb. vii. 25.) Moreover, the Father has accepted him and "set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church." There he who was

dead and is now alive forevermore walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, keeping them brightly burning by replenishing them ever with the fresh oil of the spirit and holding the seven stars in his right hand. (Rev. i. 12-20.)

From that radiant center of divine authority and heavenly exaltation the Holy Spirit is sent forth to reveal in men the life-giving power of the eternal Son. Accordingly, on the day of Pentecost St. Peter said: "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts ii. 32, 33.) In that descent of the Spirit the Church was born from above, and by the same power "to the church were added daily such as were being saved." (Acts ii. 47.) And this process of redeeming love has continued unto this hour as men have been born again and have become the sons of God to the praise of his glory, for Jesus has received all power in heaven and in earth and is the Head over all things to the Church; and as in him dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," his fullness is made manifest in the Church. Thus the glory of God, the perfection of the divine nature in him, shines forth from the saints before men and angels. Thus the end of creation and redemption is accomplished through Christ as men become one in him, the Son, as he is one in God the Father.

This oneness of human sonship with the divine Father

reveals the glory of God as nothing else could. Sons of God, partaking of the divine nature, reveal him as creatures made in his own image and likeness and transfigured by the exalting power of the new birth. One with God the Father and God the Son through the indwelling Spirit, they attain to the life that Adam might have reached and show the name—*i. e.*, the nature—of God written in their foreheads. (Rev. xiv. 1.)

It was for this oneness that Jesus prayed when he said: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." (John xvii. 20, 21.)

The unity for which our Lord prayed is not the incorporation of all Christians into one uniform ecclesiastical organization, as the Romanist and some ill-instructed Protestants vainly teach. He interceded for a far higher and nobler thing, even for community of life with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. He pleads ever for the abiding of human beings in him and his indwelling life in them.

While those who are one in Christ will be drawn together instinctively and inevitably by the attraction of their participation in a common life, the Church is not the product of their visible association, but it is rather the outcome of their invisible connection with Christ. Wherefore said Ignatius: "Where Jesus Christ is, there is the whole Church." And the Lord of Ignatius and

our Lord said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The self-existent One does not deny his presence to the smallest company of the humblest souls who are gathered in his name and are participating in his nature.

It is this vital unity which constrains the world to believe that God has sent the eternal Son among men. Let us beware how we entertain the unscriptural notion that the merging of Christian bodies into larger and larger units and the magnifying of ecclesiastical organizations will, by the imposing spectacle of a world-wide ecclesiasticism thus constructed, overcome the world's opposition to Christ and compel its belief in him.

We are assembled here to remove alienating obstacles, hurtful rivalries, overlapping ministrations, and divided purposes from American Methodism by some plan of brotherly reorganization which will bless all parties, honor our Father in heaven, and promote the progress of our Lord's kingdom on earth. May God bless us and the Holy Spirit guide us in the undertaking! But our labors will be something worse than useless if we proceed on the idea that oneness with one another in a common organization or in a skillfully constructed confederation is the oneness for which Christ prayed or the oneness for which we ought to be chiefly concerned. Our labors will be as vain as the toils of the builders of Babel and will result in a greater confusion and strife of tongues if we and the members of the Christian bodies which we represent dream of substituting a united or-



ganization for vital union with Christ, the Head of the holy catholic Church.

Only this vital union with him has power to convince the world. When Peter and John stood up to preach in Jerusalem, they were confronted by a united, powerful, and splendid ecclesiasticism, venerable by age and enthroned in the affections and prejudices of the Jewish nation; but they overcame the forces engaged against them when men "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus."

When Wesley and the early Methodists went forth to spread Scriptural holiness in a backslidden generation, defiled by worldliness and degraded by sin, their organization was the simplest and feeblest; but, by the experience of vital unity with Christ through the Spirit, they triumphed, and a gainsaying world yielded to the power of their convincing life in God. How small was the company over which Coke and Asbury were called to preside in this city one hundred and thirty-two years ago! How feeble were they if measured by the standards with which the world reckons power! But what vast results have followed their holy endeavors! They overcame, as we must overcome, "by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony." (Rev. xii. 11.) "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (1 John v. 4.) The walled cities of a powerful heathenism will not fall down under the impact of catapults and battering-rams propelled at the signal of the mellifluous notes of silver trumpets blown by worldly men, but they

will crumble at the rude blasts of rams' horns blown by priestly men who follow the lead of the ark of God. The conquest of the world can be achieved only by the consecration of the saints.

To the Church, to human souls vitally one in Christ, is committed a higher task than even that of converting the world. The Church has to be and do that by which alone the world can be converted. She has to reveal Christ as he revealed the Father. She has to be "the fullness of him who filleth all in all." She is the "sent of Christ," as he was the "sent of the Father"; and as he said of himself, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," so the Church ought to be able to say: "He that hath seen me hath seen my Lord." A Church thus revealing Christ will convince the world that the Father hath sent him, and nothing else will or can.

Nor is the ministry of Christ's Church confined to the limits of this world. St. Paul dares to affirm that "the manifold wisdom of God" is made known by the Church to principalities and powers in heavenly places, and with this view agrees the whole tenor of Scripture. In every part of the Word of God we are given to understand that the unfallen angels are sympathetically interested in God's children and God's cause in the earth. The Psalmist informs us that "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him" (Ps. xxxiv. 7); and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in a strong interrogative affirmation, asks with respect to the angels: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minis-

ter for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) St. Peter informs us that the angels desire to look into the things of Christ's salvation over which the prophets brooded with rapture when "the Spirit of Christ which was in them . . . testified beforehand the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow." (1 Pet. i. 11, 12.)

In the light of these teachings, we are not surprised that the repentance of one sinner is that event of earth which stirs joy in the presence of the angels of God. Nor is it extravagance of imagination to believe with St. Paul that the sight of a race of sinful human beings, who have become sons of God by the cleansing process of the new birth, discloses to "principalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wisdom of God."

Through Christ the Church is brought into the closest relation to all other subjects of his universal kingdom and all other creatures of his love. The purpose of God, revealed in Christ and made effectual through Christ by the Spirit in making of men and women the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, is all-embracing in its scope. It brings Jews and Gentiles together in one household of faith and "binds together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in God." In the holy bonds of this saving grace a jubilant universe will yet bind itself in eternal fealty to God, while the glory of the Father shines through his Church and the glory of the Church reveals him to all created things.

SUCH being the end which God purposed before the foundation of the world, which he has pursued through creation, providence, and redemption, its fulfillment in the glorification of the Church is the goal in which all things in heaven and earth are moving. The future is, therefore, with the Church. No after age shall ever the Christ outgrow, and his Church is equally enduring.

Not in the progress of earth-born and earth-bound civilizations is found the hope of the world and the highest glory of God. Not out of the suffrages and schemes of unregenerate men will the new Jerusalem, the final government of God, be established on earth. That divine body of life and light and law must come at last down from God out of heaven, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Then when this final culmination of God's purpose has been fulfilled through the Church, a voice out of heaven shall be heard proclaiming the utmost glory of God in his saints and saying: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away, and . . . behold, I make all things new."

Then when the end of both creation and redemption shall have been fulfilled, "the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, . . . itself also shall be

delivered from the bondage of corruption unto the glorious liberty of the children of God." (Rom. viii. 20, 21.)

This, then, brethren, is "the hope of his calling" and "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," which shall be revealed through the Church on the last day.

And we, even we, may dare claim our place in the household of faith and look in hope to the time when, amid the general assembly and Church of the first-born, we shall stand in that templeless city of which the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple, and which needs no sun nor moon to shine in it, for the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof, and where the shadow of night never falls on its days of endless joy.

While yet as weary pilgrims with bleeding feet and breaking hearts and tear-stained faces we sojourn in the earth, we may confidently and joyously claim that our citizenship is in heaven and look for the appearance of that city whose builder and maker is God, crying with Augustine: "O holy city, beautiful city, from afar I salute thee, I call to thee, I yearn for thee!"

